

**CITY OF HOLYOKE
PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES
POSITION PAPER
10 AUGUST 2026**

FOREWORD

DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS WITH “OUTSIDE CONSULTANT” FOR “UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN”
(WHERE IS THE PLAN?) (WHERE ARE THE MINUTES?)

NEXT SIX TO NINE MONTHS IN PLANNING BOARD PRIOR TO SUBMITTAL TO CITY COUNCIL WITH PROPOSED
CHANGES TO CURRENT ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP, TO “REFLECT CHANGES IN THE ZONING ORDINANCE THAT
ALIGN WITH THE GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN” (WHERE IS THE PLAN?) ?} (WHERE ARE THE MINUTES?)

CURRENT PACKAGE (DATED 12 FEB 2026) PRIMARILY ADDRESSES ZONING ORDINANCE NARRATIVE, USE TABLES,
AND MAP CHANGES, AND SPECIAL PERMIT PROCEDURE CHANGES (WHERE IS THE PLAN?)

PROPOSED CHANGES

MUNICIPAL ZONING ORDINANCES ARE CREATED, INSTITUTED, MODIFIED, AND ENFORCED BY A SINGLE AUTHORITY
HAVING JURISDICTION. IN OUR CASE, THE CITY OF HOLYOKE.

THEY ARE ADMINISTERED IN THE NAME OF PUBLIC INTEREST AND SAFETY.

THEY EXIST, BY DESIGN, AS A MEANS OF LAND CONTROL AND TAXATION.

THEY DETERMINE AND ESTABLISH ALLOWABLE LAND USE, WHAT CAN BE BUILT, WHERE IT CAN BE BUILT AND
PROPERTY TAX VALUES OF WHAT IS BUILT.

IF ENACTED AS PROPOSED, ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES WILL:

- *COMBINE EXISTING ZONES*
- *ELIMINATE EXISTING ZONES*
- *ELIMINATE EXISTING RM ZONE SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIREMENTS*
- *ELIMINATE ELECTED CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL PERMIT APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS*
- *ENCOURAGE PROPOSALS INVOLVING LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OF AGE, ABILITY AND INCOME RELATED FACILITIES*
- *INCREASE SPOT ZONING AND REZONING TO HIGHER USE GROUPS*
- *SINGLE DEVELOPER PROPOSAL APPROVAL BY MAYOR APPOINTED PLANNING BOARD*

CONFLICTS SPECIFIC TO CURRENT PROPOSED HOLYOKE ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES INCLUDE:

ORDER NO.2 ZONE CHANGE: R-1A TO R1

EXISTING ZONE R-1A CHANGED TO R1

EXISTING ALLOWED USES REMAIN; SUBJECT TO TABLE 4.3; CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL PERMIT FOR PLANNED
DEVELOPMENT AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

SEE ORDERS 11 AND 12, RE: ZONES RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40, RM-60 AND BG ABOUT NEW ZONE R1

ORDER NO. 3 COMBINE EXISTING ZONES RO AND BL FOR NEW ZONE BG

RESIDENTIAL OFFICE (RO) AND LIMITED BUSINESS COMBINED FOR NEW ZONE BG

NEW ZONE BG (BUSINESS GENERAL) GUIDELINES MATCH MOST LENIENT ON RECORD

INCREASED PROPERTY USE APPEAL

NEW ZONE BG ABUTS NEW ZONE R1 AT SELECT LOCATIONS

ORDER NO. 6 ZONE CHANGE: RO TO RM-20

CHANGE SINGLE PARCEL FROM ZONE RO (RESIDENTIAL OFFICE) TO RM-20 ALLOWING MULTI FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL AT 20 UNITS PER ACRE

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ORDER NO. 11 SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIREMENT FOR MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING

REQUIREMENT FOR SPECIAL PERMIT BY CITY COUNCIL VOTE ELIMINATED
MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING ALLOWED "BY RIGHT" PER CURRENT ORDINANCES FOR ZONES
RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40 AND RM-60

**SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE ALLOWED IN ALL ZONES R1 THROUGH BH REGARDLESS OF DESIGNATED
PRIMARY USES. PER ORDER 11, NO SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED FOR ALLOWED USE IN ZONES RM-LD, RM-20,
RM-40, RM-60 AND BG
ZONES RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40, RM-60 AND BG ABUT NEW ZONE R1**

ORDER NO. 12 SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIREMENT FOR ILRC, CCRC AND ALC

REQUIREMENT FOR SPECIAL PERMIT BY CITY COUNCIL VOTE ELIMINATED
MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING ALLOWED "BY RIGHT" PER CURRENT ORDINANCES FOR ZONES
RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40 AND RM-60

**SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE ALLOWED IN ALL ZONES R1 THROUGH BH REGARDLESS OF DESIGNATED
PRIMARY USES.
PER ORDER 12, NO SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED FOR ALLOWED USE IN ZONES RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40, RM-60
AND BG
ZONES RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40, RM-60 AND BG ABUT NEW ZONE R1**

THE ABOVE IS A SNAPSHOT.

THE CITY OF HOLYOKE NEEDS AND DESERVES GREATER DEVELOPMENT.

IF ENACTED AS PROPOSED, ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES AS DESCRIBED ABOVE WILL, AS INTENDED,
ENCOURAGE PLANNING BOARD SUBMITTAL OF DEVELOPER PROPOSALS INVOLVING LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT
OF AGE, ABILITY AND INCOME RELATED FACILITIES. **BY RIGHT.**

WITHOUT MAINTAINING EXISTING CONTROL MECHANISMS IN PLACE, LOCAL RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS MAY
VERY WELL ONE DAY WAKE UP TO CHAIN SAWS AND BULLDOZERS, WELCOMING A NEW SURPRISE NEIGHBOR.

**IN THE FORM OF POTENTIAL LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURES COMPLYING WITH THE DEFINITIONS
AND USE GROUPS FOR ZONES RM-LD, RM-20, RM-40, RM-60 AND BG WHERE THEY ABUT NEW ZONE R1.**

TO BEST PROVIDE THE POSITIVE DESIRABLE IMPACTS OF ALTERING THE ZONING STATUS-QUO TO THE CITIZENS OF
HOLYOKE, ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, NOT APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS, MUST MAINTAIN AND CONTROL THE
EXISTING SPECIAL PERMIT PROCESS.